

Knowledge Management and Information Services: Report on 2010; Priorities for 2011

January 24, 2011

ILRI Knowledge Management and Information Services (KMIS) teams in Addis Ababa and Nairobi work towards actions that:

- Empower staff to capture, connect and share knowledge with each other and with partners;
- Collect, organize and license all ILRI research outputs for maximum re-use;
- Extend the accessibility and visibility of ILRI's research outputs;
- Present the 'evidence base' from our work for others to easily find and use.

The team is organized in four groups:

Information Services, based around 'InfoCentres' in both campuses, providing a range of support to staff and visitors (reference services, journal subscriptions, meeting spaces, indexing of research outputs etc).

Editorial Services and Publishing, mainly in Addis Ababa, assisting staff along the publishing chain (printing ILRI reports, proofreading and editing, graphics, poster design and production, photography, etc).

Web Development Services, also mainly in Addis Ababa, hosting and designing ILRI corporate web products (web site, ILRINet) and supporting projects with their web development needs.

Web Communication and Knowledge Sharing, particularly supporting the use of social media and reporting (with ILRI Public Awareness). The KMIS focus is mainly on communication and sharing at the project, team and theme levels, while Public Awareness concentrates on more 'corporate' communication.

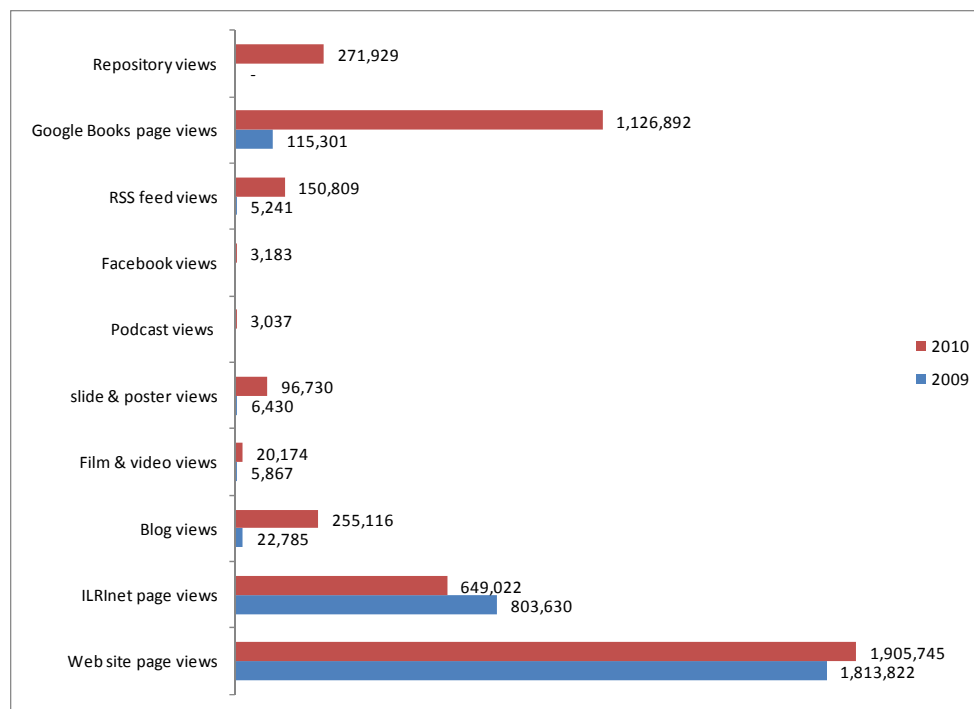
In all these areas, KMIS works closely with 'communications' people spread across ILRI research teams – contact is through an informal Yammer group.

2010 Report

ILRI web services

KMIS maintains the ILRI web site and ILRIInet intranet sites. In the past months the corporate site was rebuilt using the Drupal content management system; the ILRIInet site will be re-designed later this year. The former web site was a home-made application so the use of this standard software is a big improvement that provides us much more flexibility in managing and updating the content of the web site.

Alongside the main web sites, we have supported the use of a wide range of ‘social’ communication media by staff and projects – blogs, wikis, photo-sharing, video-reporting, and online presentations and posters. The figure below shows views of the various services (red 2009; blue 2010 to date)



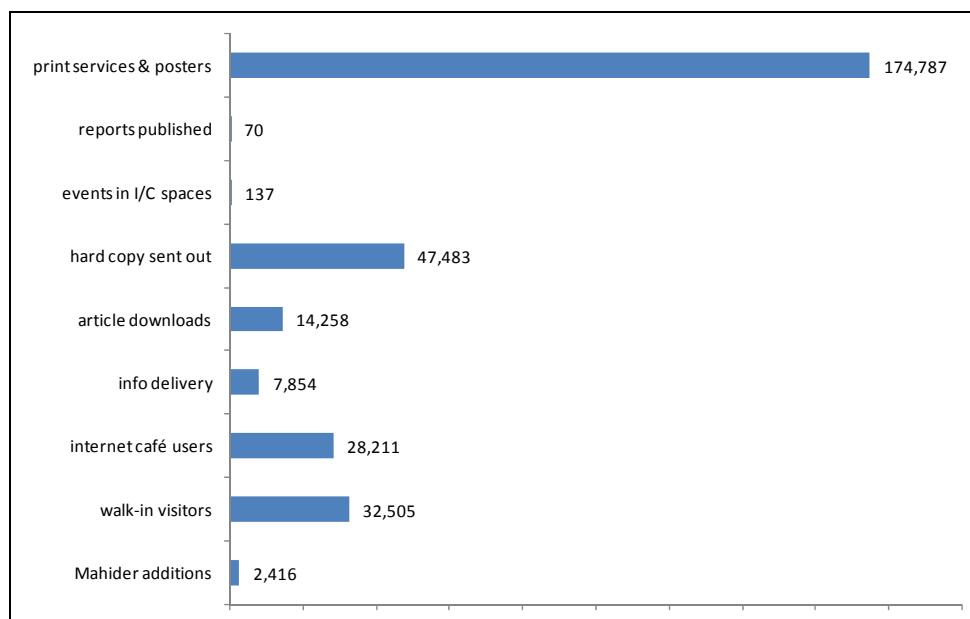
Mahider – repository of research outputs

In late 2009, we established a state of the art repository system using Dspace software to index, store, and publish all the published outputs of ILRI staff and projects. We are exploring with CPWF, ICRAF and others how we can share the use of this platform, also to index research data. The repository is now the primary way that reports are published on the ILRI web site and beyond, which helps ensure that all outputs are captured in a single place. In 2010, 2416 items were added to Mahider; attracting more than 270,000 views.

ILRI information services

KMIS provides a range of information services to staff and visitors. These include classic services such as journal subscriptions and book purchases for staff, document delivery, information/reference queries, distribution of hard copy reports and documents, and indexing of ILRI project publications and other outputs in the ILRI repository. An increasingly important service in Addis Ababa is the use of the infocentre space for meetings and workshops. Both of the campus infocentres run small internet cafes for visitors and external users.

KMIS edited and published 70 documents and publications in 2010; we also set up improved systems for freelance editing support. At the end of 2010, ILRI Management Committee adopted a creative commons license for all its reports and other 'published' outputs. This will be implemented in 2011.



Support to themes, teams and projects

The KMIS team is providing enhanced information and knowledge sharing support to different ILRI projects. These include the East Africa Dairy Development Project (new web site, repository, communication training and support); the Fodder Adoption Project (blog, repository, event support); the All-Africa conference on Animal Production (information session); the IPMS project (repository); Gender and Market-oriented Agriculture conference; PENAPH project (web site); BioInnovate Africa (web site); Nile Basin Development Challenge (communications strategy, brochures, internal communication tools); IBLI (event facilitation); CGIAR Collective Action (web site, repository).

2010 Highlights from the Teams

InfoServices

- Moved journal subscriptions to e-only
- Mahider repository reached 4000+ titles (270K views)
- Google books reached 700+ titles (1.1 million views)
- 47,000 hard copy documents distributed

Publishing

- 70 reports and documents edited, designed and produced
- 175,000 print services and posters delivered
- Institutional publishing strategy approved by MC
- Creative commons license adopted at end of 2010

Web Development

- Re-designed and re-launched ILRI website using Drupal
- Contact system upgraded
- More use of open source servers and systems
- Supported various projects - AATF, DAGRIS, AGRTR, Biometrics, etc

Support to the Livestock-Fish CRP proposal

Between July and September, KMIS provided support to the stakeholder engagement process of the livestock fish 'mega program.' We set up a wiki - <http://livestock-fish.wikispaces.com> - to enable documents and other resources to be shared in a transparent, efficient and cost-effective manner, and a blog – <http://livestockfish.wordpress.com> – where assumptions and questions were posed and comments received, and several online surveys were conducted (using SurveyMonkey).

In the two-month period (mid July to mid September), the various e-consultation tools and resources were viewed more than 14000 times; and 410 comments and feedback to our questions and the surveys were received. Presentations and video interviews about the process were also made publicly available. Full details of the consultations, including reports on the meetings held and all the response received during the e-consultation, can be found at <http://livestock-fish.wikispaces.com> and <http://livestockfish.wordpress.com>.

AgKnowledge Africa Share Fair

In October, we hosted a major event on agricultural knowledge sharing in Addis Ababa. A first of its kind event in Africa, the "AgKnowledge Africa Share Fair," brought together 300 innovators and leaders across the continent to share promising methods, tools and

approaches that help stimulate and propagate Africa's agricultural and rural development knowledge.

It was particularly useful to us as a platform to better understand and engage with a wide range of 'boundary' partners in Africa, as a capacity strengthening and learning opportunity for our staff, and as a collaboration vehicle with some international partners and other CGIAR Centers.

Making CGIAR knowledge accessible

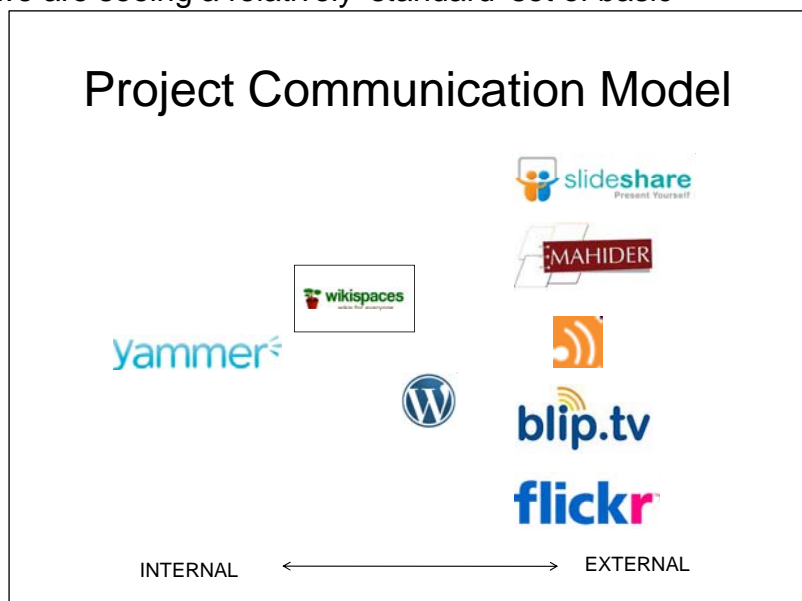
In May 2010, Ms. Nadia Manning-Thomas joined KMIS to lead system-wide efforts to make the results of CGIAR research more widely accessible. The position is funded by DFID/FAO through the CGIAR ICT-KM Program.

Knowledge sharing and communications 'models'

During the past year, working with a range of projects has helped us start to develop some 'models' to support 1) 'project communication; and 2) 'event reporting.'

Under project communication, we are seeing a relatively 'standard' set of basic requirements – conversation spaces (Yammer or similar); planning and sharing platforms (wikispaces); and a public web page to introduce the project and publish news and announcements (which usually can be done on a wordpress blog).

To these, we are working with a set of specialised tools to publish and share different types of outputs - photos, video, presentations and posters, and newsfeeds. The Mahider repository is used to publish 'documents' and to index all the various outputs.



These tools are free or very low cost, we have experience in supporting them, and they are normally easy enough for project teams to update and maintain them.

Similarly, for an event, we have identified a series of tools and applications to support planning, facilitation, broadcasting, and reporting.

An important part of this is providing support to process design and facilitation – to avoid ‘death by powerpoint’ and maximise participation and engagement of the people attending.

Once an event has started, we aim to capture and share the proceedings and discussions – the powerpoints, photos, video interviews with participants, and offer live streaming of discussions or virtual contributions using tools like ‘Ustream’ or ‘webex.’



Such models are helping us to better devise a set of tools that a project team can use, itself, to communicate its activities, and for the often invisible discussions at a meeting to be made visible and accessible.

How well did we do in 2010? Our priorities for KMIS were as follows:

- New Web site [done]
- Complete repository of outputs [done]
- Contact management system [done]
- Improve Intranet [just maintained]
- Explain, promote, train, market ‘good stuff’ [started]
- Enhance communication between KMIS <-> themes [started]
- Move to (almost) e-everything [started]
- Promote culture of (knowledge and information) sharing [in progress]
- Adopt open license for outputs [done, awareness needed]
- Measure and monitor services and outputs [quantitative metrics]

2011 Priorities

In the past year, we have seen that KMIS activities fall in one of two major types:

‘Corporate’ activities – sort of ‘ILRI public goods’ – provided to all of ILRI and including:

- The ILRI web site
- InfoServices - journals, reference services, the telecenters
- ILRIInet
- Mahider
- CC license on our outputs
- A communications ‘toolkit’ for staff to use ...

‘Project’ activities – project and team private goods – that are directed to a specific ILRI activity (and often paid by them), including:

- Communication support to projects like FAP; IPMS; NBDC
- Web and communication support to SLP, PENAPH, Collective Action, IBLI
- Web development support to various Biotechnology Theme projects and CaSt
- Communications around the Livestock-Fish CRP
- Graphics, editing and publishing for many projects

Managing the balance of work between these two areas is a growing challenge

where we need to set priorities, manage expectations, and ensure we have the right mix of people, skills and resources. To complicate this discussion, funding for ‘corporate’ activities is very restricted while projects offer possibilities to generate income to cover staff costs.

A continuing area of uncertainty is the wider CGIAR communications

environment. What support will the CRP’s expect from us, if any? Will the so-called shared services actually materialize, and for what areas of our work?

These and other priorities were reviewed at the Partnerships and Communications retreat in Addis Ababa on January 18, 2011.

Priorities for KMIS in 2011 are as follows:

- Continue to ‘train and explain’ what we are doing to staff. This needs to be proactive, with themes, and link with other P&C efforts. It would include:
 - Enhanced orientation package and tips for staff/students (P&C-wide)
 - KS/Comms/P&C ‘campaign’
 - ‘Comms Clinics’
- Re-design and re-conceptualize ILRIInet:
 - something like an ILRI ‘desktop’ – comprising a ‘daily newspaper’, with fastlinks,, repository of internal documents, facilitating conversations, supporting HR, with a single sign-on, offering various ILRI-specific

applications, some kind of 'build your own' ILRIInet concept. It is likely to be a mix of applications rather than 'a' web space that is visited.

- Reinforce internal communications
 - For example 'yammer', but need to take account of email and other tools
 - Use yammer to encourage interest groups to connect, rather than around organizational lines
- Continue to extend and enhance Mahider:
 - All ILRI outputs
 - Train and explain
 - More user-friendly interface
- Greatly improve the contact/client/partner Relationship Management System that serves strategic goals of the organization
- ILRI Web site – continue improved functionalities and integration, front page design
- Social event reporting
- Communications and knowledge sharing for projects
 - Proper budgeting into project proposals
- Make Investor handbook accessible
- Reinforce communications and knowledge sharing of CaSt team
- Extend and enhance KMIS efforts in Nairobi

In addition to these, we will continue to work on some of the 2010 priorities:

- Enhance communication between KMIS <-> themes
- Move to (almost) e-everything
- Promote culture of (knowledge and information) sharing
- Measure and monitor services and outputs (and impacts?)

We expect to be guided in our activities by:

- An internal audit of graphics and printing (January 2011)
- An external review of ILRI communications (February 2011)